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RHEHNSC/WHITE HOUSE NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL WASHINGTON DC

C O N F I D E N T I A L CAIRO 000161

SIPDIS
FOR NEA/ELA, NEA/IPA AND DRL/NESCA
TEL AVIV FOR SIEVERS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 2035/02/04
TAGS: [PGOV PHUM PREL SOCI IS EG](#)
SUBJECT: AFTER CONTROVERSY, NDP MEMBER RECEIVES WARNING FOR MEETING
WITH ISRAELI AMBASSADOR

REF: 09 TEL AVIV 2585

CLASSIFIED BY: Donald A. Blome, Minister-Counselor, State, ECPO;
REASON: 1.4(B), (D)

[1](#)1. KEY POINTS

-- (U) On February 2, the Press Syndicate issued a warning to National Democratic Party (NDP) member XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX for violating its ban on contact with Israelis by meeting September 14 with the Israeli Ambassador in her office at the GOE-funded Al-Ahram Center.

-- (C) XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX told us this warning was the lightest reprimand could have received, as the syndicate could have terminated membership, Center.

-- (C) XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX told us she blames the GOE for orchestrating a flurry of critical press articles in the weeks following the meeting and the syndicate's disciplinary hearings she was summoned to attend.

-- (C) Civil society contacts were surprised at XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX's meeting with the Israeli Ambassador. One human rights activist told us that while he sometimes meets with Israeli NGOs outside Egypt, meetings in Egypt would be "impossible."

[1](#)2. (C) Comment: Almost all of Egyptian civil society maintains a negative attitude toward Israel, consistent with the public's anger at the Israeli occupation and military actions against Palestinians, and would rule out any contact with the Israeli Government. XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX' is exceptional in this context, and the GOE is loath for any civil society activist -- particularly a member of the NDP -- to challenge the status quo. End comment.

[1](#)3. (C) XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX - member of the influential NDP policies committee and editor of the GOE-funded Al-Ahram Center's journal "Democracy" - told us the Press Syndicate issued XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX an oral warning February 2 not to meet again with any Israeli, following her September 14 meeting with Israeli Ambassador Shalom Cohen. (Note: Ambassador Cohen departed Cairo in late January. End note.) XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX said the syndicate also cautioned that she would face unspecified "consequences" if she meets again with Israelis. XXXXXXXX decision. XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX disputed the February 2 claim of a Press Syndicate disciplinary committee member on satellite television that a warning "sufficed" because XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX expressed regret over the meeting. XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX said she did not apologize to the syndicate,

[1](#)4. (C) XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX met with the Israeli Ambassador September 14 in XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX office at the center to discuss an international conference XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX for violating its 1983 ban on contact with Israelis. Mustafa told us the Press Syndicate's 1983 ban is often breached, as journalists from pro-government "Al-Ahram" newspaper have interviewed several begin hearings. XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX told us XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX did not expect political fallout from XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX meeting, and that XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX had

[1](#)5. (C) XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX noted that following XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX attendance at an August reception at the Israeli Ambassador's residence (we noticed

[1](#)6. (C) NGO contacts expressed surprise at XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX's decision to meet the Israeli Ambassador at the Al-Ahram Center. Director XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

[1](#)7. (C) Also on February 2, the press syndicate suspended XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX for three months for violating the syndicate ban on contact with Israel SCOBXY